

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, June 2, 1895, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Paris, France. 10 rue Nitot. June 2, 1895. My darling Alec:

No letter, since I last wrote, from you. Do you like me to write you so often and are my letters too long? I never feel sure whether you read them all through.

It seems as though I ought to know something about my own husband, but I can not ever be quite certain where you are, whether at the Lodge or Point. I fancy you have left the laboratory for the day by this time for it is now near twelve o'clock. How beautifully the moon must be shining over the still waters of the lake and how lovely it must all seem from the broad verandah of our own dear home. I wish I were there now, yet I am glad to say the conviction never wavers that I did right to come as far as my children's welfare is concerned. If I doubted I should be most horribly homesick.

I am sorry to say that I got myself out of one extravagance only to fall into another. I got out of going to the Battle of Flowers, but I am in for a tally-ho coach ride to Versailles. You see Monday being the Festival of Penticost (Whit-Monday), it is a holiday and so as the children have really been very good and worked hard I felt I ought to do something nice for them, especially as they were so disappointed about the flower show. Furthermore, I wanted to do something for Miss Robertson who helped us so much the first week and this was the nicest thing that occurred to me. Fifteen francs did not look anywhere near as much as ninety and I didn't count up to see how much four times fifteen was until too late. I am very sorry and won't do so any more.

I took the children to the Louvre this morning and we spent the hour among the naked statues. Both were vastly edified thereby and somewhat to my horror improved their

Library of Congress

knowledge of natural history in a point at which it had hitherto been deficient. Seems to me there used to be fig leaves about and there are none any more. I don't think their absence an improvement.

I let myself in nicely the other day and I haven't recovered from my consternation when I saw the size of the paper I bought for your photographs. It's so heavy I can't lift it! I thought I was only ordering enough sheets for your photographs, but I think I have enough to mount all the photographs Mr. McCurdy can take in the course of his natural life besides. The only trouble is I'm afraid the cardboard isn't cut heavy enough. The man assured me it was and that the kind I wanted to take was altogether too clumsy. I have sorted out the photographs and mounted one as a beginning. By the way, where is my camera? I thought you might send it on by express. I want it very much. I want to take photographs of the nuns, of our parlor and of the children in their new convent dresses. These last are tremendously becoming and are so simple that the children can wear them outside the convent and next winter at school. I have bought a tall lamp which will be just the thing for our dining-room table at Beinn Bhreagh as the stand is simply one tall Dorie Column which doesn't take up any room so it can stand in the middle of the table and give better light than the candles.

3

Sunday. I am in a Martharish mood this morning, "troubled about many things". Now that I am away do the cheques ever get signed? Mrs. Somer's bill weighs on my mind and Mrs. Trumbull and Mme. Chapins', the dressmakers. They are both poor people and need their money. Then there is the money for Helen Keller and also the money I told Mr. McCurdy last year I would put on his little cottage. He will never say anything about it but will think I have forgotten all about it and I don't like people to think I forget such things. Mr. McCurdy was not going to do anything about the little cottage and I urged him to do so and said that I would let him have the money. I think about a hundred or a hundred and fifty more dollars are due on the cottage, perhaps not so much, but please do see about it for me. I didn't in the beginning think it would cost anything like as much or I would have

Library of Congress

spoken to you about it, but as long as it has been commenced I want to carry it through. I thought the whole expense would be about seventy five or a hundred dollars and I thought it such a pity for Mr. McCurdy not to use the little cottage and I wanted the fun of fixing it up myself. I thought it would be such fun making the furniture myself, much as we did that in Crescent Grove the first summer, so I urged him to go on and I gave Mr. Stewart the orders myself. I was sure you would not object. There may not be more than fifty dollars to pay but I do not know and I want you to see about it and not let people think I forget or back down from my word. In the same way I want you to go on with your contribution to the Helen Keller fund. But when is it to be paid and how? I want to know just how our financial matters stand. I am so sorry about my sixty franc for the tally-ho tomorrow and the forty I spent in 4 carriage hire last Sunday, but I am so accustomed to our hiring livery stable carriages at home that I never thought to inquire the price, especially as I knew what it was in Rome. I find that there is four dollars difference in favor of dearness in Paris and won't go again. Perhaps you think it funny I should count my pennies here and be so reckless in Mexico, but the two cases are not at all parallel. There our objects were twofold, to travel and to pick up curiosities. I wanted to travel as much and get as many curiosities as we possibly could and did not grudge the money, here my object is not to live extravagantly and make a show, but to have as much money as possible for the children's studies and to accomplish that object with as little extravagance as possible. We must live comfortably and well as becomes your family but it is not necessary to drive in the Bois or on tally-hos. There, I have relieved my mind and feel happier. I hope I haven't thrown my burden off on your shoulders. Let it sink down to the deepest part of the big ocean that separates us and only enough of it float across to remind you to pay my debts.

The children have gone to Mass and to church, a queer combination isn't it, but they say the music is very beautiful and they wanted to hear it.

Now I am going to work some more on your photographs. Please don't forget to send me my camera and I want my Mexican notes also.

Library of Congress

Ever lovingly your own Mabel.